
BULLETIN

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BULLETIN OF THE CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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STAFF

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The Year of the Hognose

Carl Koch
1350 S 56th St
West Milwaukee WI 53214
carlstaciekoch@att.net
(all photographs by the author)

Eastern hog-nosed snakes (*Heterodon platirhinos*) have always fascinated me. Perhaps it is the challenge of finding a snake that is not often found by flipping cover items, is often superbly camouflaged, and that spends much of its time underground. Perhaps it is the physical aspects of eastern hognoses that draw me—the ability of this snake to flatten its body to the extreme, its impressive cobra-like hood with large eyespots, an amazing array of colors and patterns, the comical gaping exposing the tiny rear fangs. Or perhaps it is the endearing characteristics, the ones that so often tempt people, myself included, to anthropomorphize—the upturned nose, large eyes, smiling countenance, chubby appearance, slow and deliberate movements, tightly coiled tail, “big bad wolf” huffing and puffing. (Hognoses are the only snake I’ve ever kept that my wife has called “cute”!)

As a young boy in the 1970s, I found a pair of adult eastern hognoses and some hatchlings in Iron Mountain, Michigan. To me, they were a treasure, though my ophidiophobic youngest brother tried to pelt them with rocks! (When he was younger, a neighborhood bully had chased him holding a live garter snake, and my brother has never gotten over the fright!)

It wasn’t until a few years ago that I saw my next wild eastern hog. Ernie Guevara, past president of the Wisconsin Herpetological Society, took me to a Sauk County, Wisconsin, location known for producing easterns, and promptly flipped a large gravid



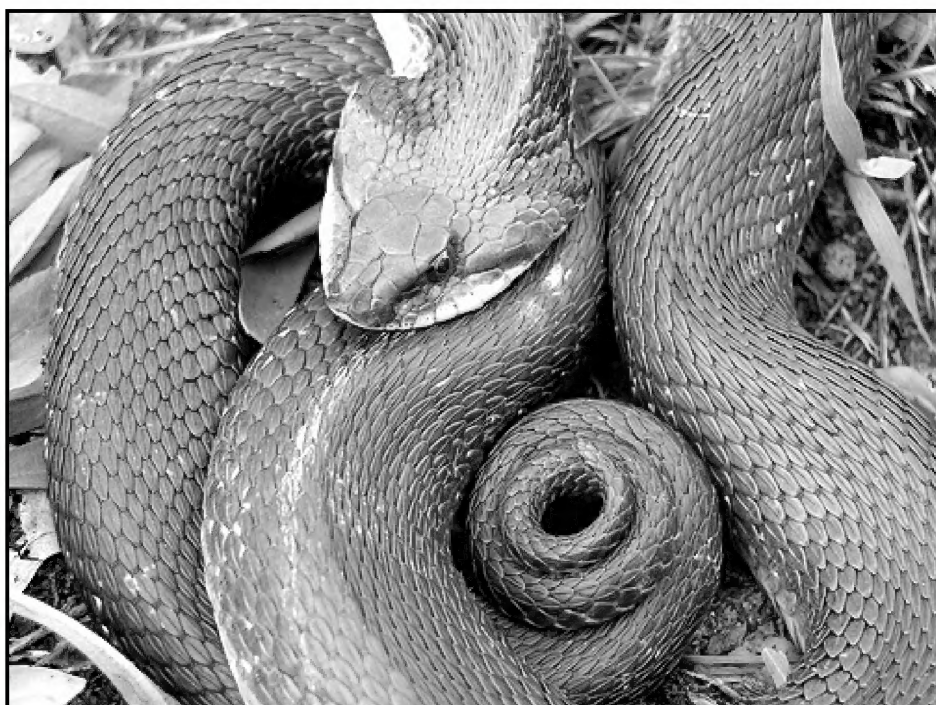
One of several eastern hognoses the author found this past year in southeastern Wisconsin. This attractive specimen was seen on October 12, an unseasonably warm day.

female under tin. (She laid 45 eggs a couple weeks later!) Ernie has since become a good friend and field companion.

This past spring and summer (2008), I had the good fortune to find several easterns and to witness some fascinating behavior. In the spring, after reading a couple of field-herping posts which indicated that eastern hogs were being found in an area in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, where I frequently herped, I made a concerted effort to find my own hog there.

I found the first one on June 21. It was quite large, though it didn’t appear gravid. This snake went through the typical defensive behaviors of the species, including hooding, gaping and noisily expelling air, lunging sideways without attempting to bite, and eventually, death feigning. It was a beautiful specimen, uniformly chocolate brown dorsally with jet black eyespots on its “hood,” and immaculate cream ventrally. The snake was well over 30 inches long and in perfect condition.

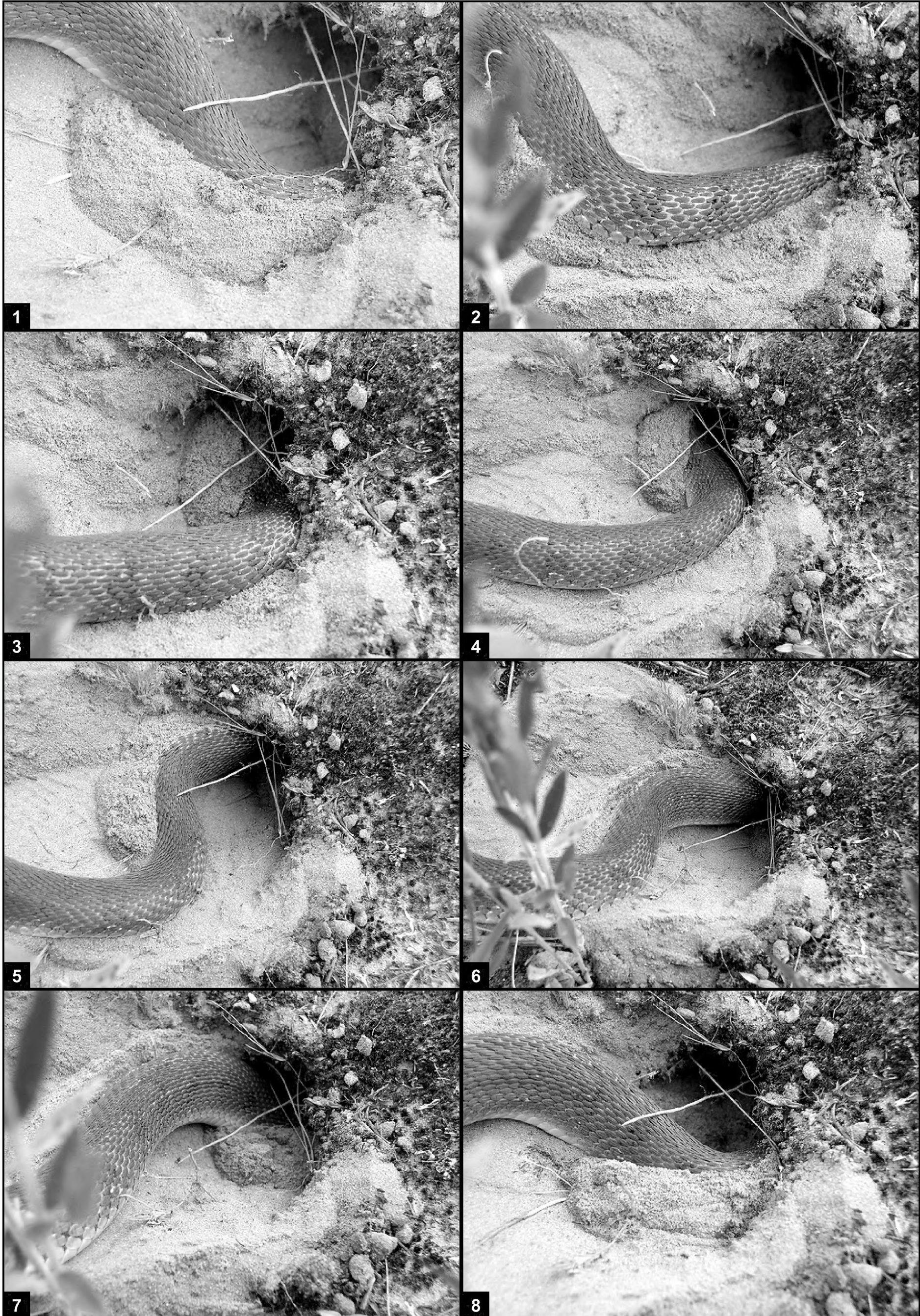
I found the second hog on June 24. This one was burrowing, and was gravid (she laid 23 eggs a few weeks later). I was with my good friend Jamie DeBoer when I came upon this snake. When I posted on FieldHerpForum.com (FHF) regarding this animal, I received replies indicating a strong interest in its burrowing behavior, including one from a well known figure in the herp world, Bill Love. On a subsequent outing (July 1), I came upon another eastern, well advanced in the process of digging.



The first hognose the author found during a very productive season.



The first picture taken of a hognose that eventually burrowed completely underground.



This sequence of photos showing the burrowing behavior was taken at 6- to 20-second intervals.



A wash of sand radiates out from the entrance to the burrow.

I decided to sit down and observe this snake's progress, and for the next two-and-a-half hours, I photographed the animal burrowing until it completely disappeared underground.

One of the most fascinating things I observed was the snake's method of removing sand from the burrow. As has been noted elsewhere, eastern hogs use their spade-shaped heads like a shovel to scoop soil as they dig. This snake would scoop with its head, which was several inches inside the burrow, and then use serpentine motion to push the loosened sand along its body until the sand was pushed out of the burrow. This formed an ever-expanding wash of sand radiating out from the entrance hole. The sequence on the facing page shows this process. The photos were taken at 6- to 20-second intervals.

As I sat watching the burrower, another adult eastern crawled right up to where I was sitting before noticing me. This was a banner day!

This second snake that "crashed the party" turned out to be another gravid female (the next day she made two more appearances at the same spot, despite my having examined and photographed her). As the burrowing hog continued, it got to a point where it stopped for a few minutes, seemingly exhausted, lying with about one-third of its body still out of the burrow. Then, it suddenly began to pull out of the burrow, coming out until I could see the dark eye-spots behind the head. I stayed abso-



A second hognose crawled into view as the author photographed the first.

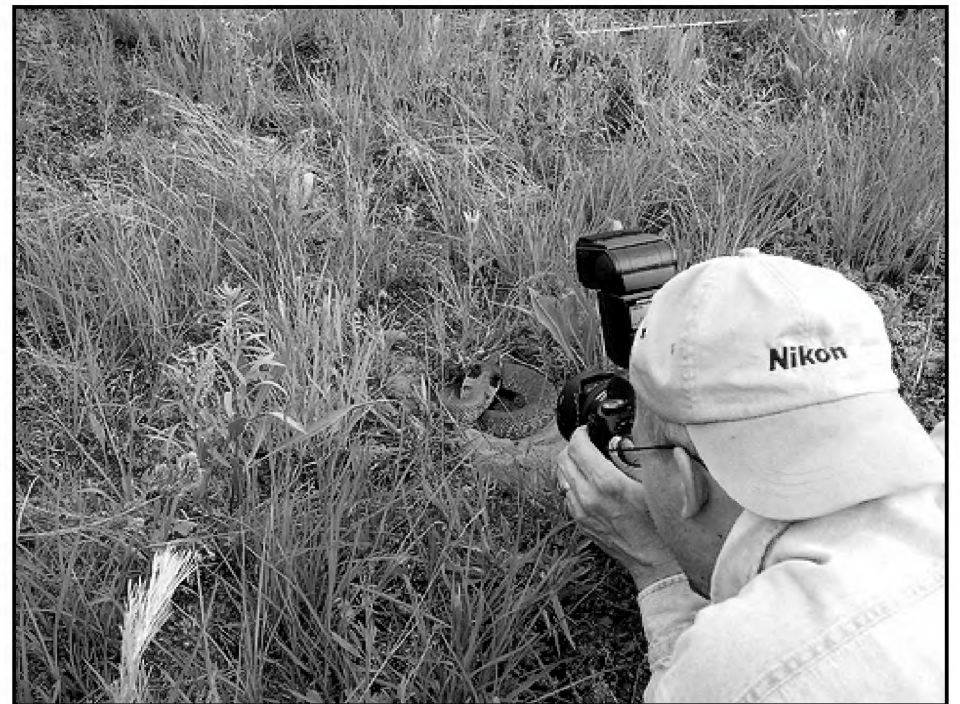
lutely still, hoping the snake wouldn't become aware of me. The animal never came completely out of the burrow, however, but instead began its digging anew. This sequence of digging, pulling out, and digging again was repeated twice more. At 9:00 P.M., the snake disappeared completely underground, the sand filling in behind it.

The following morning when I returned, the burrow had been vacated. I dug carefully with my fingers, following the burrow, expecting to encounter eggs. I dug to a length of four feet, but did not find any eggs.

I excitedly posted my photos and my account of what I had seen and received many enthusiastic responses. One response came from Steve Barten, DVM, who wrote, "I grabbed my copy of Ernst and Ernst (2003) and they document that *H. platirhinos* will 'wander extensively during the day and usually burrow into the soil for the night wherever they happen to be when darkness approaches.' They also write 'When not foraging or searching for a mate, *H. platirhinos* usually burrows into loose soil,' and then give a description of head motions, but not the lateral body motions and the backing in and out of the burrow that you saw. *H. nasicus* also spends the night 'in a temporary burrow the snake constructs in loose soil.' I agree that what you saw seems like too much effort for a temporary shelter."

I also received a response from a Canadian FHF member, Jon Wedow, who wrote, "I spent some time this weekend in the field with a biologist observing this same behaviour. They are burrowing to lay eggs, but the eggs should only be present after the entrance is filled back in. They can be found digging these burrows over the period of a few days—apparently they get too hot in the process and will leave what seems to be a partially completed burrow only to return the next day or when weather conditions are better. Another interesting thing I learned was that younger females will often follow the lead of an older female when choosing a suitable nesting area."

On July 8 I returned to this spot, which I had now dubbed the "Hog Prairie," with Jamie DeBoer and another FHF member, Anton Sorokin. I spied the rear portion of a hog sticking out of a burrow and it had the obvious flaccidity of a snake that had recently laid eggs. Unfortunately, as Jamie and Anton came over to see the snake, it slipped into the burrow.



Jamie DeBoer photographs one of the hognoses.



Avery Fritsch holds the large hognose.

On July 10 I returned to the Hog Prairie with another herper friend, Philip Fritsch, and his two children, Avery and Nora. Interestingly, we came upon another hog burrowing into the same hole of the spent female Anton, Jamie, and I had seen the other day. This suggested use of a communal burrow. This snake also appeared gravid, and was quite large. It measured over 3 feet long.

This proved to be the last burrowing female I would see this season, though not the last hog. Based on the date the first gravid female laid her eggs, I expected to see signs of hatching beginning around the end of August. During the interim, I found a juvenile eastern hog under cover which was in a shed cycle, as well as smooth green snakes, blue-spotted and tiger salamanders, and central newts of the larval, eft, and adult forms. This was a very productive area! Add to this a variety of prairie flora, and you can see why I always looked forward to visiting the Hog Prairie.

I found my first hog eggshells on September 13. I found my first hatchling on September 24. This little snake went through the full repertoire of hognose defensive behaviors, including regurgitating a central newt eft. I discovered the next hatchling



Eastern hognose eggshells, discovered by the author on September 13.

on September 28. This one regurgitated a spring peeper. I continued to find new piles of hognose eggshells beside vacated nests. On an unseasonably warm day, October 12, I found a beautiful adult hog to cap off an extremely successful year.

This certainly was a season of rich discovery for me regarding the habits of the eastern hognose. Burrowing behavior, multiple specimens to examine, hatchling prey items, and the possibility of communal nesting all added up to a tremendous herpetological experience with *Heterodon platirhinos*, the fascinating eastern hog-nosed snake. I can't wait to see what next season brings!

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the members of FHF for their encouragement and enthusiasm; Rob Carmichael, for his mentoring and patience over the years with a very green field herper; Ernie Guevara, Jamie DeBoer, and Anton Sorokin for companionship in the field; Jason Hood of the Chicago Herpetological Society for encouraging me to write this article; and Mike Dloogatch, for his excellent editing and layout work with this article.

Recommended Reading

Ernst, C. H., and E. Ernst. 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Platt, D. R. 1969. Natural history of the hognose snakes *Heterodon platyrhinos* and *Heterodon nasicus*. University of Kansas Publications, Museum of Natural History 18(4):253-420.

Tyning, T. F. 1990. Stokes guide to amphibians and reptiles. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.



Central newt eft, found at the Hog Prairie. These were found to be one of the prey items of neonate eastern hognoses.



This eastern hognose neonate was found by the author on September 28.

Notes on Mexican Herpetofauna 11: Herpetological Diversity in Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” (Saddleback Mountain), Nuevo León, Mexico

**David Lazcano, Jorge Armado Contreras-Lozano, Jose Gallardo-Valdez,
Cristina García del Peña and Gamaliel Castañeda
Laboratorio de Herpetología, Facultad de Ciencias Biológicas
Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León
San Nicolás de los Garza, Apartado Postal 513
C.P. 66450 Nuevo León
México**

Abstract

Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” is a natural protected area in the Sierra Madre Oriental. Our objectives were: 1) Carry out an herpetological inventory, and 2) Determine the distribution of species found in the area according to vegetation type and altitudinal gradient. Based on plant communities, the area to be studied in “Cerro de La Silla” was divided into four zones: submontane matorral, low semi-evergreen forest, oak forest and pine forest. Twelve field trips were conducted during 2005 (April–October) and at the beginning of 2006 (April–May); each trip lasted 2–4 days. Our herpetological survey was focused mainly on submontane matorral and low semi-evergreen forest. A total of 123 individual specimens were observed. Ecological distribution of species was as follows: 14 species in the low semi-evergreen forest, and 8 species in the submontane matorral. Based on the literature, this natural protected area Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” harbors 46 species. In this research we observed 17 of those species.

Resumen

La Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” es un área natural protegida dentro del macizo de la Sierra Madre Oriental. Los objetivos fueron: 1). Hacer un inventario herpetológico actualizado, 2)..Determinar la distribución de las especies presente aquí por tipo de vegetación y rango altitudinal. El área que aquí fue estudiada del Cerro “La Silla” fue dividido en cuatro zonas de acuerdo a la presencia de las comunidades vegetales, que fueron: matorral submontano, subperennifolia, encino y bosque de pino. Se realizaron 12 viajes de colecta durante el inicio de 2005 (Abril–Octubre) y hasta los meses de Abril–Mayo de 2006; cada viaje tenía una duración de 2 a 4 días. El inventario herpetológico se enfocó principalmente en las comunidades vegetales de matorral submontano y subperennifolia. Un total de 123 individuos fueron observados. La distribución ecológica de las especies fue de la siguiente manera 14 para subperennifolia, 8 para matorral submontano. De acuerdo a la literatura citada la Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” alberga 46 especies. En esta investigación se observaron 17 de estas especies.

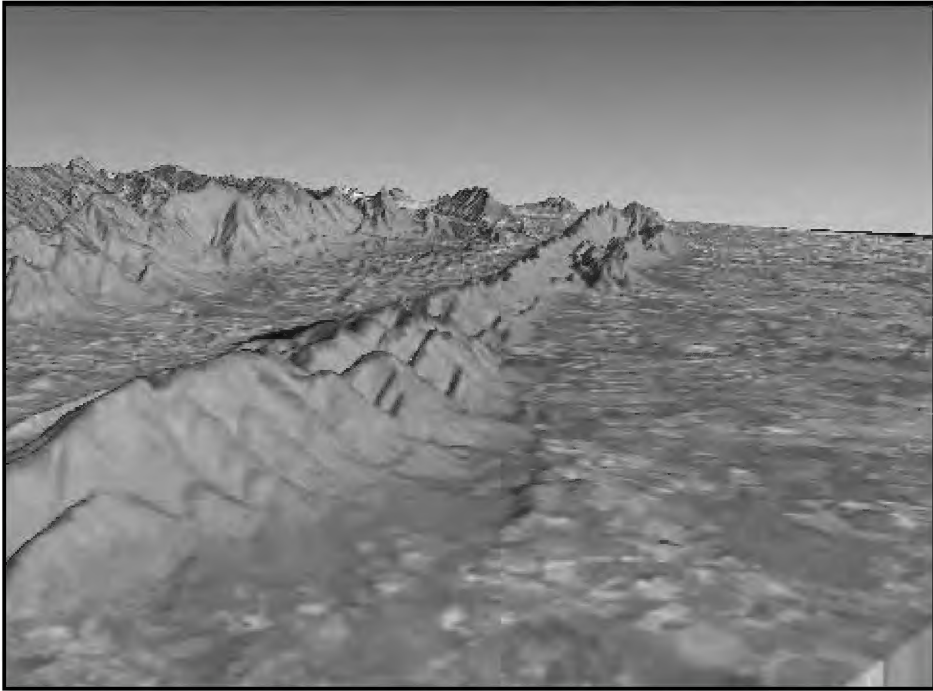
Introduction

The Sierra Madre Oriental is a chain of mountains running north–south throughout eastern Mexico, from the boundary with the United States to central Mexico. This mountainous system occupies an area of 60,978.34 km², which is equivalent to about 3% of the country’s territory, and varies in altitude between 200 and 3600 m (Luna et al., 2004). Several regionalization systems of Mexico, based on both physical and biotic criteria, show the Sierra Madre Oriental to have unique geographical and biological diversity. Geology and vertebrate distribution patterns combine to make it different from other regions.

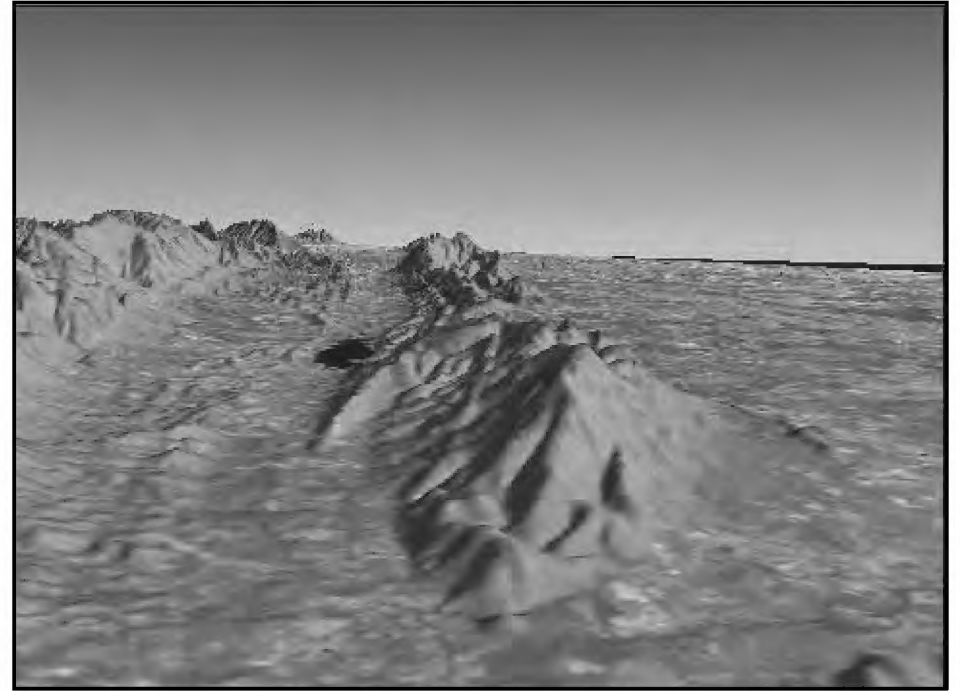
Considering the above, our interest has increased in conducting herpetological surveys throughout those portions of the state of Nuevo León that harbor sections of this Sierra Madre. This has been especially true since the establishment of federal national and state protected areas or parks (Anonymous, 2000; Arriaga et al., 2000). Some of these surveys in the Sierra Madre area would be: Parque Ecológico Chipinque (Banda, 2002;

Lazcano et al., 2006); Sierra San Antonio Peña Nevada (Lazcano et al., 2004); San Juan y Puentes in Aramberri (Lazcano et al., 2007); Sierra de Picachos (Contreras-Lozano et al., 2007); and recently in process Sierra “Cerro del Potosí” and Cuenca Palo Blanco. But there are still many areas that haven’t been surveyed.

Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” or Saddleback Mountain without any doubt is the most representative natural landmark for the inhabitants of the state of Nuevo León and northeastern Mexico; it is an important natural area, with a wide diversity of biological resources that give 4 million inhabitants natural services. However, until now no actual survey or inventory study had been conducted in this area. In this field work an update survey herpetological study was conducted, taking note of plant association and altitudinal gradient distribution. Information here obtained has contributed significantly to our knowledge of herpetological distribution in this landmark within the Monter-



3-D view of Sierra "Cerro de La Silla" from the north-northeast.



3-D view of Sierra "Cerro de La Silla" from the south-southwest.

rey metropolitan area. This knowledge will help establish better conservation and management practices of vertebrates in both east and west slopes, involving in this action private owners and the government offices that regulate activities in state natural protected areas.

Physical and biological characteristics, along with its geographic location make the Sierra "Cerro de La Silla" corridor in Nuevo León, Mexico, extremely vulnerable to the explosive growth of the Monterrey metropolitan area, which is certain to continue on the eastern slope of the mountain.

Location and Characteristics of the Site

Sierra "Cerro de La Silla" physiographically forms part of the Sierra Madre Oriental that is included in the Gulf Coastal Plain province, within Nuevo León, in northeastern Mexico. Geographic location of the protected area is given by Anonymous (2000). The protected area covers about 10620 ha, occupying mountainous parts of the municipalities of Allende (1117 ha), Cadereyta (1021 ha), Guadalupe (1908 ha), Juárez (3331 ha), Monterrey (800 ha) and Santiago (2442 ha). Much of the eastern slope is still intact (but in great

danger because of human housing development). Latitude ranges from 25°33'2"N to 25°33'60"N; longitude from 100°2'17"W to 100°11'59"W. Altitude varies from 500 to 1300 m.

Climate in the area is classified as (A)C(W°) corresponding to the temperate group, with semi-warm and subhumid areas,

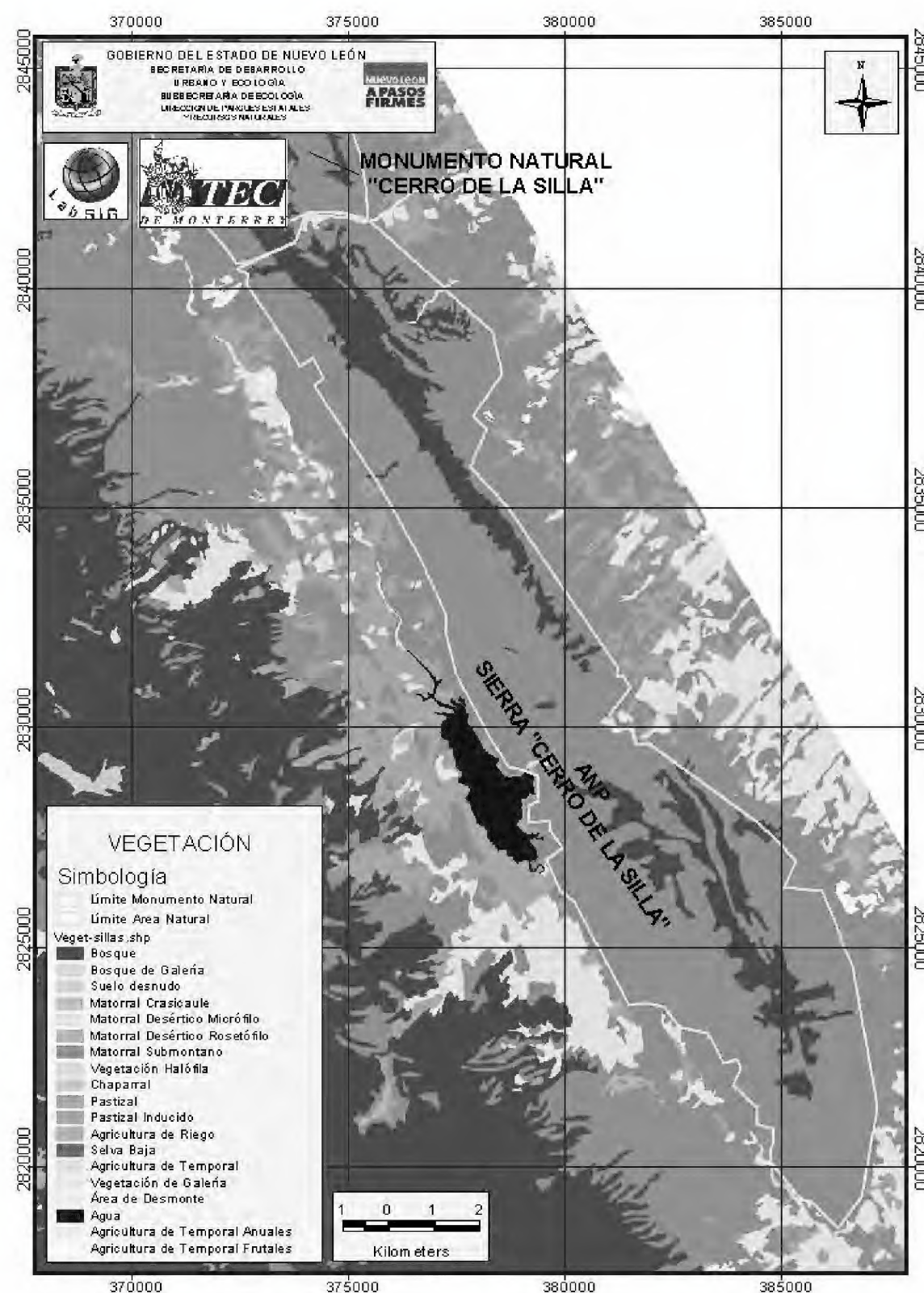
with rains in the summer and 5 to 12% of rains in the winter (García, 2004). The annual median temperature is higher than 18°C and the coldest month temperatures fluctuate between -3 and 18°C.

This protected area is located in the Monterrey hydrological basin, its principal river is La Silla, fed by the tributary streams Calabozo, La Virgen and Elizondo, that arise on the slopes of the northeast section of Parque Nacional Cumbres of Monterrey. These waters end up in the Santa Catarina River, another landmark of Monterrey.

Plant communities in this protected area are as follows:

Submontane Matorral (7,691.77 ha)

The climax areas of this plant community can reach heights over 6 m, with outward-extending branches giving it a dense appearance. The dominant



Vegetation map of "Cerro de La Silla"

Table 1. Species Present in the Natural Protected Area Sierra “Cerro de La Silla,” Nuevo León, México. Recent taxonomic changes follow Crother et al. (2003) and Liner (2007); altitude gradients are as given by Canseco-Márquez et al. (2004).

Class	Order	Family	Scientific Name	Altitude Gradient (m)	Status
Amphibia	Anura	Bufonidae	<i>Ollotis nebulifer</i>	310 – 1550	
		Hylidae	<i>Ecnomiohyla miotympanum</i>	200 – 2600	
			<i>Smilisca baudinii</i>	200 – 1450	
		Ranidae	<i>Lithobates berlandieri</i>	300 – 2500	
		Brachycephalidae	<i>Eleutherodactylus augusti</i> †	1100 – 1800	
			<i>Eleutherodactylus cystignathoides campi</i>	930 – 1800	
			<i>Syrrhophus longipes</i> †	500 – 1800	
		Leptodactylidae	<i>Leptodactylus fragilis</i> †	425 – 1800	
Reptilia	Squamata	Anguidae	<i>Gerrhonotus infernalis</i> †	1356 – 2835	Special Protection
		Phrynosomatidae	<i>Phrynosoma modestum</i> †	600 – 1250	
			<i>Sceloporus grammicus disparilis</i> †	1700 – 2600	Special Protection
			<i>Sceloporus serrifer cyanogenys</i>	800 – 1800	
			<i>Sceloporus jarrovi cyaneus</i>	Not mentioned	
			<i>Sceloporus olivaceus</i> †	200 – 650	
			<i>Sceloporus torquatus binocularis</i>	2349 – 2835	
			<i>Sceloporus marmoratus</i>	200 – 1800	
		Scincidae	<i>Plestiodon brevirostris pineus</i>	1400 – 2835	
			<i>Scincella silvicola caudaequinae</i>	310 – 2100	Special Protection
		Teiidae	<i>Aspiloscelis gularis gularis</i> †	200 – 1320	
		Xantusidae	<i>Lepidophyma sylvaticum</i> †	310 – 2000	
		Leptotyphlopidae	<i>Leptotyphlops myopicus myopicus</i> †	Up to 1200	
		Colubridae	<i>Coluber constrictor oaxaca</i> †	200 – 1060	Threatened
			<i>Coluber schotti ruthveni</i> †	1300 – 1800	
			<i>Diadophis punctatus regalis</i> †	Up to 1800	
			<i>Drymarchon melanurus erebennus</i>	475 – 710	
			<i>Drymobius margaritiferus margaritiferus</i>	550 – 1010	
			<i>Ficimia streckeri</i> †	640 – 880	
			<i>Lampropeltis alterna</i> †	Not mentioned	Threatened
			<i>Leptodeira septentrionalis septentrionalis</i> †	500 – 2000	
			<i>Leptophis mexicanus</i>	550 – 1260	Threatened
			<i>Opheodrys aestivus</i> †	Not mentioned	
			<i>Pantherophis bairdi</i> †	Up to 2300	
			<i>Pantherophis emoryi</i>	200 – 740	
			<i>Rhadinea montana</i>	Up to 2134	
			<i>Salvadora grahamiae lineata</i> †	200 – 750	
			<i>Sonora semiannulata semiannulata</i> †	Not mentioned	
			<i>Storeria hidalgoensis</i> †	1380 – 2954	
			<i>Tantilla atriceps</i> †	Not mentioned	
			<i>Tantilla rubra</i> †	350 – 1050	
			<i>Trimorphodon tau tau</i> †	1000 – 2100	
			<i>Tropidodipsas sartorii sartorii</i> †	350 – 1600	
		Elapidae	<i>Micrurus tener tener</i> †	Up to 2000	Special Protection
		Viperidae	<i>Crotalus atrox</i> †	Up to 1900	Special Protection
			<i>Crotalus lepidus lepidus</i> †	Up to 2835	Special Protection
			<i>Crotalus molossus molossus</i> †	Up to 1800	Special Protection
			<i>Crotalus totonacus</i>	Up to 1680	Special Protection

† Individuals cited in the literature that were not observed in the survey.

species are *Acacia amenthaceae*, *Casimiroa pringlei*, *Fraxinus greggii*, *Helietta parvifolia*, *Neopringlea integrifolia*, *Pithecellobium pallens* and *Zanthoxylum fagara*. Less dominant are *Ehretia anacua*, *Cordia boissieri*, *Sargentia gerggii* and *Randia laetevirens*. In lower numbers are found *Celtis pallida* and *Indigofera suffrutescens* (Melgoza, 1977). According to plant association this community can be divided into *matorral submontano inerme*, *matorral submontano subinerme* and *matorral submontano espinoso* (Cabral-Cordero, 1984).

Oak Forest (2,075.55 ha)

The highest areas of Sierra are located in the portion that corresponds to the municipality of Santiago. Here the height of the forest is between 10 and 13 m, with dominant species such as *Quercus polymorpha*, *Quercus canbyi*, and *Brahea berlandieri*, considered a codominant species especially in areas that have suffered forest fires in the past. This type of plant community is found along steep eastern and western slopes.

Low Semi-evergreen Forest (808.98 ha)

Low semi-evergreen forest forms a small portion of the protected area. Here we can find species such as *Pithecellobium ebano*, *Aristolochia* spp., *Operculina dissecta*, *Matelea reticulata*, *Echites coulteri*, *Clematis drummondii*, *Meloyhia crassifolia*, *Ipomoea* spp. and *Centrosema virginianum* (Rojas-Mendoza, 1965).

Materials and Methods

Plant communities found in this study were determined using INEGI (1978a-r) maps. Communities present were: submontane matorral, oak forest, low semi-evergreen forest and a very small extension of pine forest and grassland (about 48 ha). Oak forest sampling was excluded from this study, because it was literally inaccessible. A total of 12 trips were conducted during April–October of 2005 and April–May of 2006, with a 2- to 4-day period in each trip, investing a total of 10 search hours per day (9:00 to 14:00 and 15:00 to 20:00 hrs). We used the Campbell and Christman (1982) searching method, locating and capturing specimens in the substrate they were using (rocks or rock piles, dry tree trunks, live plant substrates, under leaf litter and any artificial substrate, in mud ponds or other water bodies, etc.).

Specimens were captured using snake hooks, leather gloves and forceps; they were transported in labeled cloth bags. Each collected specimen was given an identification collecting number; a field collecting sheet was filled in. When possible specimens and habitat were photographed. For each collected specimen the following data were taken: species, date, collecting hour, altitude, plant community found, active or non-active, substrate used, ambient humidity and temperature, weather conditions.

Specimens collected here were identified using Smith and Taylor (1945, 1948, 1950), Conant and Collins (1998), Lemos-Espinal and Smith (2007), and SSAR catalogue accounts. In particular the phrynosomatids genus-species groups for Nuevo León and Tamaulipas were identified using special keys prepared by Dr. Hobart Smith and personnel of our lab.

Results

The literature indicates that 8 species of amphibians and 38 species of reptiles can be found in Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” (Table 1). Summarizing our collected material, 17 species were observed in the Sierra “Cerro de La Silla,” distributed taxonomically as follows: Amphibians: Anura (4 families, 5 genera and 5 species. Reptiles: Squamata—lizards (2 families, 3 genera and 6 species); Squamata—serpents (2 families, 6 genera and 6 species). This then represents 37% of those cited in the literature.

It is important to mention that 11 of the reptile species known from the area are listed in NOM-059-ECOL.-2001 (Anonymous, 2001) and are considered threatened or in need of special protection. Eight have Special Protection status: *Gerrhonotus infernalis*, *Sceloporus grammicus disparilis*, *Scincella silvicola caudaequinae*, *Micrurus tener tener*, *Crotalus atrox*, *C. lepidus lepidus*, *C. molossus molossus* and *C. totonacus*. Three are reported as Threatened: *Coluber constrictor oaxaca*, *Lampropeltis alterna* and *Leptophis mexicanus*.

Discussion

The herpetofauna of the Sierra Madre Oriental comprises 207 species: 2 families, 4 genera and 20 species of salamanders;

Table 2. Ecological distribution and species frequency present in the different plant communities in Natural Protected Area Sierra “Cerro La Silla,” Nuevo León, México.

Species	Low semi-evergreen forest	Submontane matorral	Total
<i>Ollotis nebulifer</i>	23	6	29
<i>Ecnomiohyla miotympanum</i>	29	0	29
<i>Smilisca baudinii</i>	1	0	1
<i>Lithobates berlandieri</i>	2	7	9
<i>Eleutherodactylus cystignathoides campi</i>	23	5	28
<i>Sceloporus serrifer cyanogenys</i>	1	0	1
<i>Sceloporus jarrovi cyaneus</i>	0	6	6
<i>Sceloporus torquatus binocularis</i>	1	0	1
<i>Sceloporus marmoratus</i>	1	4	5
<i>Plestiodon brevirostris pineus</i>	2	0	2
<i>Scincella silvicola caudaequinae</i>	0	2	2
<i>Drymarchon melanurus erebennus</i>	1	0	1
<i>Drymobius margaritiferus margaritiferus</i>	3	0	3
<i>Leptophis mexicanus</i>	1	1	2
<i>Pantherophis emoryi</i>	0	1	1
<i>Rhadinea montana</i>	2	0	2
<i>Crotalus totonacus</i>	1	0	1
Number of specimens	91	32	123
Number of species	14	8	17



Submontane matorral plant community.



Low semi-evergreen forest plant community.



Crotalus totonacus.



Water bodies are found throughout the park.



Ollotis nebulifer.



Plestiodon brevirostris pineus.

6 families, 14 genera and 44 species of anurans; 12 families, 20 genera and 49 species of lizards; 5 families, 48 genera and 88 species of snakes; and 2 families, 3 genera and 6 species of testudines (Canseco-Márquez et al., 2004).

Table 2 shows the ecological distribution of the specimens we collected. The low semi-evergreen forest plant community showed the highest herpetofaunal activity: 14 species were found here, 5 species of anurans, 4 of lizards, and 5 of serpents, with a total of 91 individuals observed. In the submontane matorral 8 species were found: 3 species of anurans, 3 of lizards and 2 of serpents, with a total of 32 observed individuals. The following authors point out in their distribution maps the possibility of finding these species in the area (Table 1): Behler and King (1992), Dixon and Werler (2005), Canseco-Márquez et al. (2004), Conant and Collins (1998), Gallardo-Valdez (2006), Köhler and Heimes (2002), Werler and Dixon (2000), and Lemus-Espinal and Smith (2007). Our efforts confirm the presence of these species for the area. Colubrids were the least found, probably due to their crepuscular and nocturnal habits. The oak forest community area was not sampled because it was extremely difficult to access from any point of the sierra.

In this study we collected 17 species. Fourteen species were found between 450 and 600 m, and 3 species between 601 and 750 m; none were found from 901 up to 1350 m. These results are consistent with the altitude gradients given by Canseco-Márquez et al. (2004). An update of the herpetofauna found in the state of Nuevo León accounts (literature and preserved collections) for ~127 species (http://www.fcb.uanl.mx/esp/herpetologia/lista_herpetofauna_de_NL). There is also a general study of the Sierra “Cerro de La Silla” where 46 species are reported, but no collecting or sampling was ever conducted; it

was based on literature map records that indicated the possibility of the species being found here (Anonymous, 2000; Contreras-Balderas et al., 1995).

It is possible that this Natural Protected Area accounts for a larger number of species; we hope to continue monitoring the area, especially the eastern slopes (plant communities, seasonal, diurnal and nocturnal activities and climate changes), and that will likely increase the total. The low number of species observed in this survey could be due to many different factors such as the altitude gradient, seasonal fluctuations in humidity and temperature, habitat destruction and forest fires. Another important factor is that during the time of this survey the state of Nuevo León suffered from a drought.

Most of the species mentioned here are also found in all surrounding mountain sites. With the exception of *Lepidophyma sylvaticum* and *Crotalus totonacus*, both reported for this area, no endemic species has been found in this sierra habitat. There still exist mountainous areas in Nuevo León that haven't been collected in the municipalities to the north and south. We hope to continue our research of the area, expecting that financial support will continue flowing from government and non-government organizations. Pinpointing these species in the different mountain areas will fill in gaps of their distribution throughout the state and the northeast of Mexico.

Acknowledgments

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What You Missed at the January CHS Meeting

John Archer
j-archer@sbcglobal.net

The Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) is a Midwestern species. OK, it ranges into the east and Canada a little, but it's Great Lakes and upper Midwest mostly. It's a pretty turtle, with its high domed, yellow-spotted shell and bright yellow chin. It can even close the front of its plastron, much like a box turtle, but not as tight. In the wetlands that it mostly frequents in northern Illinois the turtle blends well with the low vegetation and duckweed-covered water. This turtle was probably once very common in the Chicago area before humans began to drain the wetlands, but the numbers have been on the decline for many years. Over their entire range Blanding's turtles are struggling to survive, and they have yet to be federally protected. Illinois didn't list these turtles as threatened until 1999, but by then Dan Ludwig, a biologist for the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, had already been working three years on a head-start program in an attempt to save the Blanding's from eradication in northern Illinois. Dan Thompson, our guest speaker for January's meeting, became part of that program a few years later, and now runs the Blanding's head-start and reintroduction program. It's nice to know that even in Chicago's back yard there are dedicated people without whose efforts our lives would be a little more depauperate.

Dan Thompson is one of those people. Since shortly after graduating from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, with a B.S. in Fisheries Management, a B.S. in Biology, and a minor in Natural Resource Management, Dan has worked for



January speaker Dan Thompson at the podium.
Photograph by Dick Buchholz.

the district as a wildlife ecologist and is currently involved not only with the Blanding's recovery project but also the district's attempts to reintroduce the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) to DuPage County. When I walked into the meeting room he had already set up his computer and projector, and shortly thereafter he was chatting amicably with members he knows, including Jenny Vollman, who has worked with him on barn owls. Our members are certainly not limited by their interest in herps. Well most of them, anyway.

On top of having to set up his presentation without the help (?) of your fearless leader, Dan was fighting the beginnings of a cold, which nearly cost him his voice by the end of the meeting and kept him from joining us for dinner afterwards. He still managed to deliver an informative and interesting overview of his work, and stayed well after his presentation to answer questions. With plenty of pictures, graphs, and videos Dan gave us an overview of the Blanding's recovery project in DuPage County.

Dan gave a rundown of some of the threats to the turtles' survival. Familiar to those of us who have paid any attention to conservation issues, he illustrated loss of habitat with two starkly contrasting aerial photos, one taken in 1954 and the other taken in 2003. The two pictures were a dramatic illustration of habitat loss. He provided us with pictures of many of the predators of the Blanding's, including the raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). I know that raccoons are cute and fuzzy. I once had one as a pet.



A section of DuPage County in 1954 and the same area in 2003. A good illustration of lost habitat and increased road threat.



Too cute to comment.

But after listening repeatedly to turtle researchers tell me how devastating they can be to turtle populations, I'm not quite as fond of them as I used to be. The Blanding's can retract enough to present the raccoon a difficult target, but raccoons have been known to flip the turtle onto its back and wait until it emerges to turn itself right-side up before consuming the now exposed turtle.

Dan has found many shells with chew marks on them from these subsidized predators. Because Blanding's turtles often roam over great distances, they are subject to extensive predation by that top predator in modern society, the automobile. Dan says that he finds crushed turtles right on the centerline, implying that drivers actually swerve to hit them. Human fishing is not a threat that I would have thought made much of a difference, but Dan pointed out that swallowed fishhooks often take out the larger and more productive animals. He noted that one of the missions of the Forest Preserves is to encourage fishing. Sometimes just habitat alteration can have an impact on populations. More surviving nesting habitat is being linearly arranged along paths, roadsides and power lines and this may make the nests easier for predators to find.

Tracking studies are being conducted using marginal scute markings, microchipping, and radio telemetry, each with successes and problems. The breeding program has matured to where the successful hatching rate is close to 90%, but now the program may be releasing animals that would not have survived in the wild and may be introducing a deficient animal into an



The early raising tanks for the hatchling Blanding's turtles.

already shallow gene pool. Dan gave us a history of the breeding program and the false starts, the errors of husbandry, and the current thinking that the program uses. Turtles are now raised outside as much as possible, growth rates have been slowed slightly, and the artificial nesting areas are closer to what may be found in the wild. They keep the turtles fearful of humans and release a range of sizes in each year class. Releases happen in spring, summer and fall, but fall is now preferred. His presentation had pictures of the breeding and raising facilities, hatchling turtles, turtles carrying radio transmitters, and turtles being threatened by cars. He had videos of turtles moving in their natural habitat, turtles hatching, and turtles digging nests.

For over six years Dan Thompson has been working with organizations such as the Brookfield Zoo, Cosley Zoo, Willowbrook Wildlife Center, Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Shedd Aquarium, University of Illinois and others on the Blanding's turtle project. He has recaptured a number of his releases, the longest in the wild being five years. He has learned many things not to do, and some things to do. Head start programs have detractors, and whether or not this one will be successful remains to be seen, but much is being learned about the natural history of the Blanding's turtles, the breeding of these animals, and the potential of programs such as this. Dan Thompson says that he will consider his efforts a success when he discovers a released female digging a nest in the wild. Blanding's turtles probably mature in 15 to 20 years. In the meantime, he'll keep on studying, experimenting and learning.

Showtime

by John Archer
j-archer@sbcglobal.net

ReptileFest is April 4 and 5. I asked Mike to resurrect this article, especially for those of you who may not have much experience showing your animals. I haven't changed much, and I may have some small points that in certain circumstances contradict the new exhibition rules that the CHS board has approved for all exhibitions, but I don't think so. You still have to be familiar with the rules, and obviously, if there are conflicts with this article and the official exhibition rules, the rules . . . er, rule.

Most of us happily show off our animals whenever we get the chance. We can easily spend an afternoon showing an interested person our collection, even if the collection consists of a single animal. As the attendance at our annual June show-and-tell meeting demonstrates, we like sharing our animals with other people. That's one of the reasons we belong to the CHS. What's the point of having cool critters if no one else knows about them? And the desire to let others know about our animals fits closely with one of the stated missions of the society, to educate the public about reptiles and amphibians. One of the primary ways that we accomplish this is by bringing our animals to some of the numerous live-animal shows that the society is asked to do.

Having done these shows for a few years, and having worked with ReptileFest numerous times, I think I've gained a few insights into the dos and don'ts of presenting your animals to the public. I don't know everything, and I don't pretend that my way is the only way, but I'm the one writing the article. If you want to express your views, write your own article. Remember that I'm striving for the ideal. I have never done a perfect show, nor do I think that you'll achieve that after you've read this article, but if I can prevent you from making some of the larger mistakes, you'll be ahead of the game the next time you stand in front of a crowd of people asking questions and wanting to handle your very special bearded dragon.

The shows that I'm referring to are not the type where you'd stand on a stage with a hands-free mike and wow the crowd with your great stories and terrific animals. I don't do those kind, and they require skills I probably don't have. I'm not even talking about giving school presentations or performing in front of your local boy scout troop. Those types of shows usually require more than one animal, a script or a lot of practice, and stage presence than most of us lack. I leave those shows to the Bavirshas or Jim Nesci or Dick Buchholz. The shows I'm talking about are closer to demonstrations, where I stand around with an animal in my hand or next to their cage and wait for people to come to me. The CHS does these for museums, park districts, libraries, and other venues and they are essentially miniature ReptileFests. I'll discuss four major aspects of these shows: you; the animal; the audience; and the setting.

You

You're probably smarter than you think you are. You may

not know the scientific name for the blue-tongued skink, or how many chambers an amphibian's heart has, but you do know your animal and your interactions with it. Don't lie if you don't know the answer to a question. But the two most frequently asked questions are "Does it bite?" and "Is it poisonous?" I bet you know the answers to both of those. And you know more about YOUR animal than anyone else. People want to know how you interact with it, how you care for it, and what you find fascinating about it. Of course, you may not be as smart as you think you are and the person you're talking with may not be as stupid as you think they are, so don't condescend. Talking down to someone or putting them in their place can back fire when your audience turns out to be a professor of herpetology at Kansas State University. Besides, none of us like to be reminded of how ignorant we are. You're not there to show how much you know; you're there to help others understand and maybe respect these animals. And, especially for the younger show people, never try and scare people with your animals or make fun of those who are afraid. Everyone is afraid of something.

Remember that you've raised your animal and it's healthy. If it isn't healthy, it shouldn't be at the show. Husbandry is an evolving science, especially when it comes to herps. There are definitely wrong ways to keep an animal, but there is probably more than one right way to raise a healthy animal. If your animal is healthy, you're doing something right. That doesn't imply that you shouldn't continue to evaluate your methods. The goal is to get your animal as healthy and happy as possible. You will be able to teach people about caring for the species you have, but you may also learn something.

Check your appearance before you leave for the show. Maybe today is not the day to wear your "Bloodwatch, Vampires at War" T-shirt. Nor would it be good to grab something from the bottom of the laundry basket. Casual is OK, but this may not be the best time for in-your-face clothing. Also keep in mind that few of the animals that we casually drape over our shoulders can be housebroken, so a spare shirt may come in handy. And you'll be talking to people at a close distance. Maybe skipping the garlic pizza for lunch is a good idea.

Listen to what your audience has to say. Almost everyone has an animal story that they want to share. Let them. You may learn something, but more importantly, as ambassadors for our animals, listening allows us to connect with our audience. I rarely will directly contradict some of the wilder tales I hear. I use terms like "unlikely" when someone swears they had a gaboon viper in their basement, and I try not to correct all the technicalities that the speaker has gotten wrong. I'm not trying to turn these folks into herpetologists, and good biologists will rarely state definite facts, especially when they involve animal behavior. Besides, with the popularity of reptiles increasing, and knowing how easily these animals escape, who am I to say that it wasn't a gaboon viper?

The animal

Perhaps the first thing that your audience will notice is your animal's appearance, but that doesn't necessarily mean you should bring only your best-looking animals. A malformed, deformed or injured animal can be a valuable teaching tool, demonstrating how people abuse or mistreat animals. The animal should be healthy, however. Shows are stressful enough for the animals when they are healthy, and you should make sure they stay healthy. This may mean bringing heat pads or ice blocks (for amphibians) to keep your animals as comfortable as possible. Make sure that your animal gets breaks from being handled. They can get really tired from being passed from person to person. Animals that appear in public should have a temperament that can handle crowds. An excitable or worse, a biting animal, should be left at home. My animals' safety is the most important thing to me at a show. And while I don't yell at children who mishandle my turtle, I will gently correct them and I expect everyone who touches or holds my animals to follow my rules. They are MY animals. Also, if the animals are handled correctly, I worry less about the safety of the people.

If you have animals that are in cages, make sure that the cage looks attractive and is kept clean. People judge us on what they see. I have a sign that states that the display cages are not the cages the animals live in. I made it after it was pointed out to me that the public might assume that it's alright to keep a ten-inch tiger salamander in a two-and-a-half-gallon aquarium all the time. And make some attractive labels or signs for the cages. A scrawled name on a scrap of paper is better than no name, but a neatly printed sign makes a much better impression.

The audience

Watch the people who come by. I bring out different animals for different groups. Small turtles are rarely happy being mauled by a group of toddlers, but a tortoise might handle the attention with aplomb, or at least apathy. Baby snakes do not get handled by kids, but, if adults are nervous, they may have an easier time holding a small snake. Kid groups are always boisterous, but some group activities can easily engage them. I have amphibians, which I don't let people handle, but kids love to feed them. And I often invite a child who seems genuinely interested and responsible to help me put away my salamanders and frogs at the end of the show. Genuinely interested and responsible kids are also allowed to be one of my snake wranglers. I let them handle the snakes, giving them tips on how to pass the animal, how to watch the person taking the animal, and how to protect the animal. You may not feel comfortable doing this, but if you are, and you judge your kids correctly, it can make a kid an animal lover for life, and you can take a little break. No, you can't go to lunch, but you can stay nearby and not have to work quite so hard. Some of these kids have shown up at later shows, coming just to do my work for me. As a friend of mine once said, "Who'd of thought that there were reptile groupies?" Always respect the audience and avoid those assumptions, either good or bad, that prevent you from really

understanding and connecting with them. And if you're really thinking about the audience, you'll have hand sanitizer.

The venue

You need to know the conditions that you and your animals will have to cope with. Where's the parking? How far do I have to transport my animals, and how will I do that? Is the show indoors or out? Do you have access to electricity or water? Is there a trash can (what do you do when your animals defecate)? Is there a special theme to this event? Museum shows are different from Chicago Park District shows, and both are totally different from the "expos" --- different crowds, different facilities, different treatment from the host of the event. I have a box that I take to every show that contains tape, scissors, paper, heating pads, spare bulbs, zip ties, extra cage furniture, spare shirt, etc. I admit that I even have a general check list that I review as I'm packing. I don't want to show up at an unheated event in the middle of January without some way of keeping my animals warm, and while most venues can supply you with many items, it's always faster and easier if you already have everything you'll need when you arrive.

I could write much more, and I repeat that I don't have all the answers, but if there are those among you who are considering showing your animals, I hope I have given you the basics. The main reason I do shows is because they're fun. The more I learn about my animals, the more fun I have teaching others. Learning new information allows me to expand on my answers when people ask questions, and keeps me from repeating myself and becoming bored. I'm constantly learning from other society members around me at shows. Many snakes really do feel like basketballs, as Mike Scott asserts, and that's a much better analogy than a wallet. Being alongside people like Jenny Vollman, Bob Bavirsha or Rich Crowley provides a huge opportunity not only to learn how to better present your animals, but also to learn more about herpetology in general.

Anyone who has done a show will tell you that they are a lot of work. They take time and energy from you and your animals. So why do I do them? Because I get to watch as a toddler bursts into the room and freezes as she sees the ten-foot python sliding across the floor. She slowly approaches, and with a look of awe on her face, she gently extends a hand and strokes the snake's back. No fear in this two-year-old, just a recognition of shared life. Or I watch as a south side teenager taller than me overcomes his fear and winds up holding my milksnake up to his girlfriend, proudly explaining that "This snake won't hurt you. It's a good snake." I get to swap snake stories with a 92-year-old grandmother who has kept many reptiles and amphibians over the years, as I recognize first to my surprise that this lady likes these animals, and then realize that we are a very diverse group that is impossible to physically qualify. Schoolkids shriek and scream as my slothful tiger salamander makes a lightning-fast grab at the mealworm one of them is holding, then all clamor to be the next to feed him. Snakes aren't slimy; amphibians are. Get out there and teach people that.

Herpetology 2009

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

NEW SPECIES OF GLIDING FROG FROM PANAMA

J. R. Mendelson III et al. [2008, J. Herpetology 42(4):750-759] describe *Ecnomiohyla rabborum*, a new species from the vicinity of El Valle de Anton, Cocle, Panama. This is a large species that differs from similar species in the genus by details of the prepollex, webbing, and by the presence of a distinct expanded crista lateralis with medial proximal point. Descriptions of the adult and subadult, as well as the tadpole, are provided. Natural history information is included, including observations of individuals gliding from the forest canopy, reproduction in tree holes, and male territoriality and care of the tadpoles. This species is currently known only from the immediate vicinity of El Valle de Anton, and the authors have observed numbers of this species in the wild to decrease dramatically following the recent epidemic of amphibian chytridiomycosis in the region. The specific epithet for this spectacular amphibian honors George B. and Mary S. Rabb for their career-long contributions to conservation of all biodiversity, and especially for their substantial support of programs to conserve the amphibians of the world.

PHILIPPINE FRESHWATER TURTLES

A. C. Diesmos et al. [2008, Chelonian Conservation and Biology 7(2):157-177] present updated accounts on the status and distribution of all known species of freshwater turtles in the Philippines, including information on taxonomy, natural history, exploitation and conservation status. Six species of native non-marine turtles (*Dogania subplana*, *Pelochelys cantorii*, *Cuora amboinensis*, *Cyclemys dentata*, *Heosemys spinosa*, and *Siebenrockiella leytenis*) are recognized from the Philippines, two of which are trionychids and four geoemydids. One of these (*S. leytenis*) is an endemic species. There is some evidence to suggest that Philippine populations of *P. cantorii*, *C. amboinensis*, *C. dentata*, and *H. spinosa* may warrant further taxonomic study. The fauna also includes three introduced species (*Pelodiscus sinensis*, *Trachemys scripta elegans*, and *Chrysemys picta*). *Pelodiscus sinensis*, *D. subplana*, *C. amboinensis*, and *S. leytenis* feature prominently in the domestic food and pet trade. Preliminary information indicates that these species are also illegally exported to supply international animal markets. The lack of basic information on the natural history of freshwater turtles in the Philippines stands as an obstacle to the implementation of effective conservation and management measures. The authors recommend that a national program for Philippine freshwater turtles be established to address priorities for research, conservation, and management of this threatened and poorly studied faunal assemblage.

GRAY TREEFROG MICROHABITAT

J. R. Johnson et al. [2008, Herpetologica 64(3):259-269] note that it is important to identify and understand the critical habitat components of organisms inhabiting landscapes that are increasingly altered by human activities to adequately predict the effects of habitat alteration on natural populations. This study identifies terrestrial habitats that are important to the gray treefrog (*Hyla versicolor*) during the nonbreeding season using radiotracking and mark-recapture/release of individuals captured in artificial arboreal refugia. High humidity and rainfall were associated with decreased captures in artificial refugia, while high ambient air temperatures were correlated with increases in the number of treefrog captures. Refugia placed in small trees recorded more small individuals than those in larger trees, and refugia in white oaks (*Quercus alba*) contained females more frequently than expected at random. Space-use estimates encompassing foraging and overwintering locations of gray treefrogs were relatively small and typically included only a few adjacent trees during the nonbreeding season. The authors discuss the physical and biological aspects of habitat patches that may be important in determining the persistence of gray treefrog populations.

OSTEODERMS OF THE CALIFORNIA LEGLESS LIZARD

B.-A. S. Bhullar and C. J. Bell [2008, Copeia 2008(4):785-793] note that *Anniella* is a clade within Anguidae including small-bodied serpentiform lizards, previously hypothesized to be miniaturized relative to other parts of Anguidae. Ancestrally, Anguidae displays an extensive armor of dermal ossifications, but the presence or absence of osteoderms in *Anniella* was a source of some confusion in the past. The authors confirm that *Anniella* possesses osteoderms in the dermis deep to nearly every epidermal body scale, as well as remnant ossifications deep to the head scales. The body osteoderms display three basic components: an anterior plate bearing apparent growth ridges, a usually constricted neck portion with a distinct microstructure, and a branching portion divided into a variable number of processes. Under high magnification, collagen bundles similar to those on other lizard osteoderms are visible. The osteoderms of *Anniella* are reduced in their ossification relative to those of other Anguidae; they are thinner, occupy only the middle regions of the dermal scale component, and their posterior portions appear only as a series of fingerlike processes. Reduction in the osteoderms of *Anniella* contrasts with reinforced solidity of many of the skull elements, supporting the idea that modularity was involved in the evolution of miniaturization in this clade.

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, January 16, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:47 P.M. at the Schaumburg Public Library. Board member Brad Trost was absent.

Officers' Reports

Recording Secretary: Cindy Rampacek read the minutes of the December 19 board meeting and minor corrections were made. The minutes were accepted.

Treasurer: Andy Malawy presented the December and year-end financial reports. No questions were raised.

Membership Secretary: Mike Dloogatch reported that December membership was at 553. Most non-renews for the month were last year's grant applicants.

Vice-president: Jason Hood reported on upcoming programs for this year: March—James Parham, April—Dave Barker, June—Show and Tell, July—Kate Jackson, September—Kathryn Tosney. Cindy Rampacek is working on getting a guest in from Australia for the May general meeting. She will let Jason know when things are arranged.

Corresponding Secretary: Deb Krohn mentioned that a cub scout troop approached CHS for a program.

Publications Secretary: Aaron LaForge is just about ready to put a new ReptileFest page on the CHS website. A page for the Midwest Herp Symposium is waiting on pricing and other items from Jason.

Sergeant-at-arms: Dan Bavirsha reported that there were 67 people at the December general meeting.

Committee Reports

Shows:

- Great Lakes Pet Expo, Saturday, January 31.
- Project Exploration, Dinner with a Dinosaur, February 27
- Kids Expo, February 28–March 1.
- Reptile Rampage, March 8.
- Chicagoland Family Pet Expo, Arlington Racetrack, March 20–22.
- Notebaert Nature Museum, first weekend of each month.

Adoptions: There was discussion regarding the opening of adoptions to non-members and specifics involved in that process.

Old Business

Rules for live animal exhibitors: Cindy Rampacek moved to accept the current writing of the rules for live animal exhibitions at CHS functions. Jenny Vollman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note cards: Thank-you note cards have arrived at Cindy's; however she forgot them.

Round Table

Deb Krohn has a lot of freebies from pre-move cleaning. She thought *The Lizard King* was amazing and suggested the author, Bryan Christy, as a possible guest speaker.

Cindy Rampacek, Rob Carmichael and Dan Bavirsha assisted the Racine Police Department and Countryside Humane Society in a large scale confiscation today.

Rick Hoppenrath was wondering if there was anything needed for committees for 'Fest.

Linda Malawy may have a new press contact for 'Fest.

Mike Dloogatch shared that Lincoln Park Zoo magazine had a nice article on massasaugas.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Cindy Rampacek



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For sale: Rats—live or frozen. I breed rats for my collection of boas so only top quality lab chow and care will do, I'm now offering surplus animals for sale. Located in far south suburbs of Chicago. Only orders of 20 or more please, no large rats will be available. For current availability and prices, please e-mail Steve at smuys@sbcglobal.net.

For sale: herp books. A. John Coventry and Peter Robertson, *The Snakes of Victoria*, 1991, 70 pp., many color photos, range maps, 6 figs., descriptions and natural history info, published by Museum of Victoria (Australia) (s), \$35; James R. Dixon, *Amphibians and Reptiles of Texas* with keys, taxonomic synopses, bibliography (32 pp., literature from 1852-1982), and distribution maps, 1987, 434 pp., 25 b&w photos (s), \$10; Raymond T. Hoser, *Australian Reptiles & Frogs*, 1989, 238 pp. (8½ × 11½"), 631 color photos of herps and their habitats, range maps, bibliography; info on captive husbandry, conservation, reptile photography, DJ (h), \$135; Stephen K. Wilson and David G. Knowles, *Australia's Reptiles—A Photographic Reference to the Terrestrial Reptiles of Australia*, 1988, 447 pp., almost 850 color photos, illustrates more than 95% of terrestrial reptiles in color, descriptions, preferred habitat, range maps, DJ (h), \$130; T. F. Houston, *Reptiles of South Australia - A Brief Synopsis*, 1973, 11 pp., 24 color photos, South Australia has about 160 species of reptiles (s), \$12. h=hardbound, s=softbound. All books in excellent condition. \$3 postage and handling for orders under \$25, free for orders \$25 and over. William R. Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle W., Centennial, CO 80122. e-mail: toursbyturner@aol.com; telephone (303) 795-5128.

For sale: Well started 2008 C.H. Sri Lankan stars, leopard tortoises and pancake tortoises. All captive-hatched by us and eating great. Stars are \$450 each, with temperature-sexed pairs from unrelated females available. Leopards are \$125 each and pancakes are \$350. Contact Jim or Kirsten Kranz at 262-654-6303 or e-mail KKranz1@wi.rr.com.

For sale: Trophy quality jungle carpet, diamond-jungle, and jaguar carpet pythons. Website: moreliapython.googlepages.com E-mail: junglejohn@tds.net

For sale: Well started spider morph ball pythons (*Python regius*) available for free delivery in the Chicagoland area—males, \$350. Also available are high-contrast, Sarawak locality and Walnut × Sarawak pairing Borneo pythons (*Python breitensteini*). Pricing is based on male sex with \$50 more for females, if available: 2007 high-contrast, \$150; 2007 Sarawak, \$175; 2006 Sarawak, \$200, 2007 Walnut × Sarawak (melanistic Borneos), \$125. All feeding on frozen thawed adult mice and/or rats. Shipping available as an additional cost, if needed. Details and helpful info on my website at www.richcrowleyreptiles.com Contact Rich Crowley at 708-646-4058 or email pogona31@yahoo.com.

Herp tours: Adventure trips to **Madagascar!** Journey somewhere truly unique to seek and photograph nature on the world's least-studied mini-continent. For maximum herp fun and discovery, join Bill Love as we go where few people will ever venture in their lives. Let his experience assure a comfortable tour finding the most colorful and bizarre species on the planet! Get all the details at Blue Chameleon Ventures' comprehensive new website: < <http://www.bluechameleon.org> >, E-mail: bill@bluechameleon.org, or call (239) 728-2390.

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Snake sitting or boarding: Mild-mannered adult female reticulated python, 18 feet, needs you from May to fall 2009. We are searching a responsible person either to house sit with her in northern Michigan or care for her at your home (non-Illinois only). Must be willing to feed her rabbits and shed her. Attractive, flexible terms. For more details, contact Kathy Bricker, 231-627-4830 or kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com

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Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members — \$2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail: MADadder0@aol.com

HERP-ACROSTIC #19 by Mike Dloogatch

1 R	2 F	3 B	4 Q	5 L	6 C	7 E	8 O	9 G	10 D		11 K	12 F	13 J	14 D	15 L	16 Q	17 I		18 P	19 C		20 H	21 I	22 G
23 F	24 T	25 N	26 Q	27 D	28 J	29 O	30 K	31 L	32 E		33 H	34 V	35 B		36 E	37 V	38 A	39 L	40 N	41 S		42 D	43 S	
44 D	45 T	46 B	47 S	48 K	49 N		50 O	51 G	52 C		53 M	54 U	55 D	56 B	57 H	58 L	59 C		60 N	61 P	62 D	63 L	64 R	65 A
66 Q	67 E		68 O	69 M		70 V	71 K	72 D		73 A	74 H	75 P	76 D	77 Q	78 O	79 K	80 B	81 I		82 N	83 K	84 S	85 D	86 O
	87 M	88 A		89 N	90 P	91 R	92 C	93 G	94 D	95 K	96 J	97 O		98 M	99 L	100 O		101 C	102 T	103 N	104 D	105 P	106 I	107 B
108 U	109 F		110 L	111 J	112 K	113 S	114 O	115 E	116 B	117 C		118 U	119 D		120 Q	121 P	122 A	123 D	124 K	125 C		126 C	127 H	
128 O	129 R	130 Q		131 R	132 M		133 K	134 D	135 Q	136 E	137 N	138 M	139 V	140 G	141 J	142 C	143 F	144 P	145 S		146 C	147 O	148 A	
149 O	150 T	151 Q	152 D	153 P	154 J	155 U	156 R		157 C	158 U	159 T		160 E	161 D	162 R		163 H	164 D	165 Q		166 H	167 K	168 V	169 P
170 R	171 O		172 T	173 U	174 D	175 Q	176 P	177 R	178 V		179 J	180 G	181 I	182 A		183 U	184 O	185 F		186 D	187 P	188 O	189 L	190 F
191 A		192 K	193 M	194 O		195 D	196 M	197 E	198 T	199 Q	200 P	201 C	202 V	203 F	204 J		205 S	206 C	207 P		208 P	209 K	210 Q	211 O
212 N	213 E		214 V	215 R	216 O		217 E	218 K	219 H	220 G		221 L	222 D		223 J	224 D	225 L	226 B	227 Q		228 K	229 I	230 D	231 C
232 V		233 P	234 S		235 B	236 A	237 O	238 H	239 L	240 C	241 P	242 N												

How to solve this puzzle: The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work on herpetology. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The letter at the upper right of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. The WORDS form an acrostic: taking the first letter of each in order spells out the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

CLUES	WORDS	
A. _____ <i>Frogs</i> : 2008 book by Michael Lannoo.	182 65 73 88 236 191 38 122 148	L. Pentastomids; tongue worms 99 221 5 63 58 39 189 225 31
B. Museum director after whom Boulenger named an African viperid (last name only).	56 116 226 3 80 107 46 35 235	15 110 239
C. SSAR publication subtitled <i>Essays on Herpetological Exploration in the West Indies</i> (four words).	201 59 142 146 206 52 19 157 231 117 6 92 240 101 125 126	M. Pygopodid, literally. 132 138 98 53 69 196 87 193
D. One of many vernacular names for <i>Agkistrodon piscivorus</i> (three words).	10 119 222 152 27 62 55 224 161 14 164 186 123 76 72 94 104 42 195 85 174 44 230 134	N. East African geographic feature (two words). 212 40 242 25 82 89 60 137 103 49
E. Vegetable commonly used to exemplify the shape of the parotoid gland in various toad species (two words).	217 7 36 197 213 32 160 67 136 115	O. English-language title for a much-acclaimed photographic portrait of a Zapotecan Indian woman (five words). 68 237 78 100 128 149 97 211 8 171 184 86 188 114 216 50 147 29 194
F. In Greek mythology a nymph, wife of Orpheus, who died after stepping on a venomous snake.	185 203 12 109 23 143 2 190	P. Mexican photographer whose work includes the above-named portrait (full name). 200 187 61 75 233 176 241 153 18 144 90 121 208 105 207 169
G. _____ snake: <i>Farancia erytrogramma</i> .	180 22 9 51 140 93 220	Q. Neustophagia, for instance (two words). 151 77 130 210 199 120 227 135 4 165 175 26 16 66
H. Colorful local vernacular for the hellbender (two words).	166 127 219 163 57 20 33 74 238	R. One traveling with GreenTracks or Blue Chameleon Ventures, for instance. 156 170 215 91 131 64 177 129 1 162
I. In Greek mythology any of three sisters, monsters who had snakes for hair.	81 181 21 17 229 106	S. Kinship. 205 47 43 113 41 84 234 145
J. Heighten.	141 28 96 111 154 204 13 179 223	T. Italian herpetologists study them. 172 102 198 45 150 159 24
K. Margaret Lane's biography of a famous African snakeman (three words).	30 95 48 209 11 79 124 71 133 83 218 192 228 167 112	U. Museum director after whom Boulenger named an Australian elapid (last name only). 155 54 158 108 173 183 118
		V. Branch of biology dealing with the minute structure of tissues. 34 139 178 70 37 168 202 232 214

News and Announcements

2009 CHS GRANT RECIPIENTS

The CHS Grants Committee has chosen the CHS grant recipients for 2009. The committee consisted of Michael Dloogatch, Linda Malawy, Amy Sullivan and Steve Sullivan. This year we received 23 applications, as usual exceeding the number of grants that could be awarded based on available funds. After a difficult decision process, 9 grants were awarded, in varying amounts, as follows:

- Whitney J. Banning, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "Impacts of Landscape Alteration on Freshwater Turtle Populations," \$657.
- J. D. Steeves Buckland, School of Biological Sciences, University of Bristol [UK]. "Status and Conservation of Mauritian Fauna and Flora Threatened by the Invading Madagascar Giant Day Gecko, *Phelsuma grandis*," \$500.
- C. Drew Foster, Lincoln Park Zoo, "Using Noninvasive, Fecal Hormonal Analysis to Characterize the Reproductive and Stress Biology of the Prehensile-tailed Skink (*Corucia zebrata*)," \$500.
- Maya Groner, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Pittsburgh. "Effects of Predator Stress on Immune Function and Susceptibility of Anurans to the Emergent Infectious Disease *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*," \$1000.
- Paul M. Hampton, Department of Biology, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette. "Venom Function in Pitvipers: Does Prey Envenomation Enhance Digestive Performance and Reduce its Cost?" \$500.
- Abigail J. Maley, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "Variation in Four-toed Salamander, *Hemidactylium scutatum*, Microhabitat Use Across Age Groups and Sexes," \$500.
- Tami S. Ransom, Department of Biology, University of Virginia. "Salamanders Mediate Below- to Above-ground Interactions through Direct, Indirect, and Ecosystem Engineering Pathways with Earthworms," \$300.
- Kelsey Reider, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University. "Do Peccaries Drive Community Changes in a Neotropical Leaf Litter Herpetofauna?" \$300.
- Dan Zeh, Environmental Studies, Antioch University. "The Natural History of Two Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) Populations in Southwestern New Hampshire," \$500.

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ReptileFest 2009

April 4,5

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, February 25, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. **Timothy Herman**, a keeper at the Toledo Zoo, will speak on “Found and Lost: Discovery, Extirpation and (hopefully) Reintroduction of the Kihansi Spray Toad.” The Kihansi spray toad, *Nectophrynoides asperginis*, was discovered in 1996 during the construction of a hydroelectric facility in Tanzania. One of the world's only live-bearing frogs, it was extinct in the wild by the end of 2003. Successful captive assurance colonies at the Toledo and Bronx Zoos provide the only hope of survival for this highly endemic amphibian.

The speaker at the March 25 meeting will be **James Parham**, who is a postdoctoral research associate at the Field Museum of Natural History. We don't have a title for his program yet, but Jim specializes in turtles.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society take place at Chicago's newest museum—the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. A plethora of CTA buses stop nearby.

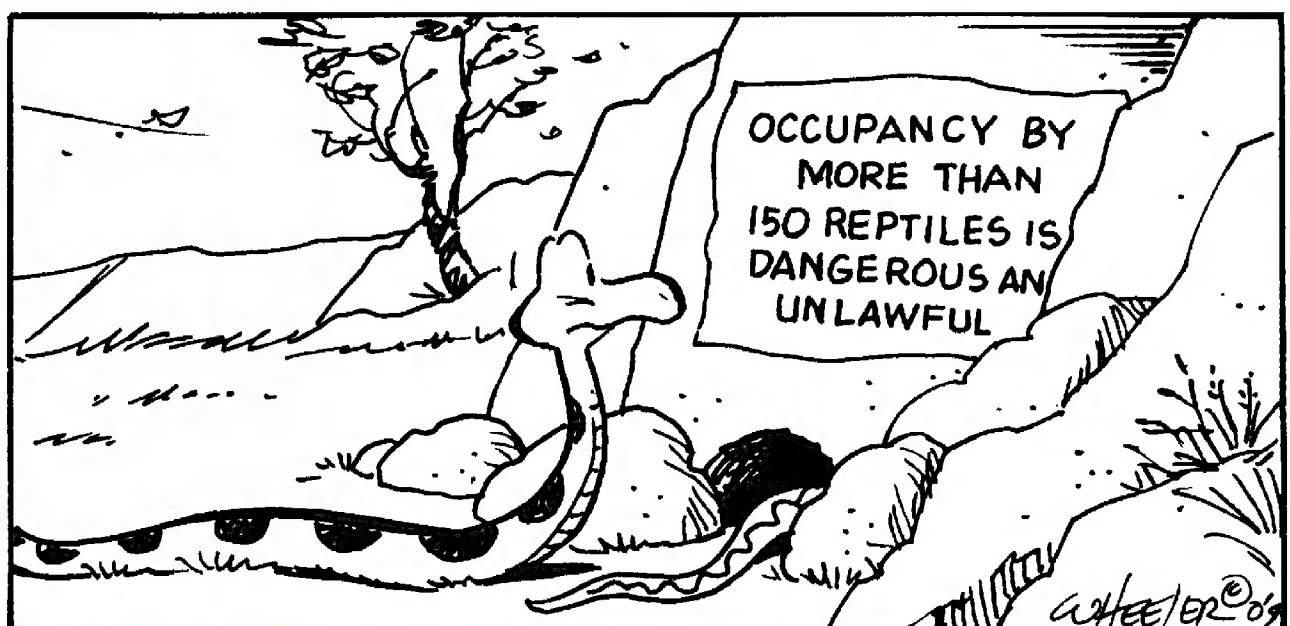
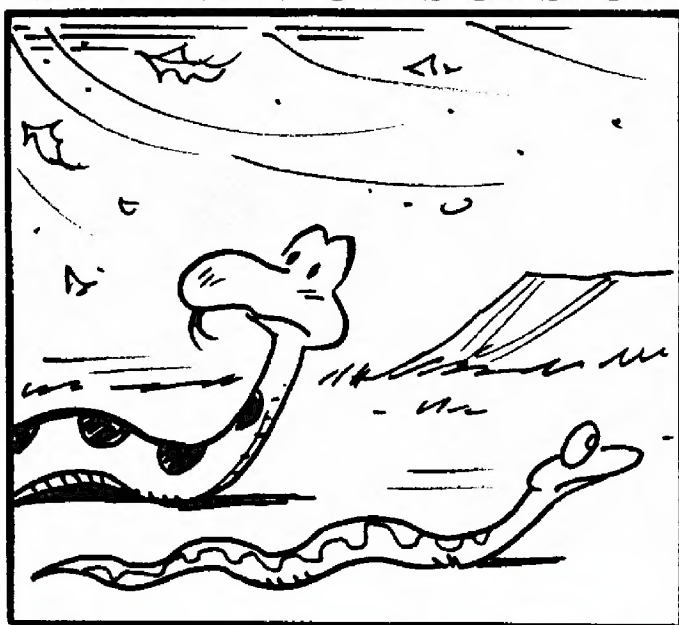
Board of Directors Meeting

Are you interested in how the decisions are made that determine how the Chicago Herpetological Society runs? And would you like to have input into those decisions? If so, mark your calendar for the next board meeting, to be held at 7:30 P.M., March 13, in the adult meeting room on the second floor of the Schaumburg Township District Library, 130 S. Roselle Road, Schaumburg.

The Chicago Turtle Club

The monthly meetings of the Chicago Turtle Club are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Meetings normally take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Parking is free. For more info visit the CTC website: <http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle>.

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